

Summary Minutes

Alexandria Waterfront Committee Tuesday, February 21, 2012

Alexandria City Hall

Members:

Present: Kent Barnekov, Alexandria Seaport Foundation,
Gina Baum, Alexandria Park and Recreation Commission
Arthur Fox, Citizen east of Washington St. and south of King St.
Linda Hafer, Old Town Business and Professional Association
Charlotte Hall, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce
Nathan Macek, At-large citizen and Chair
Jody Manor, Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association (ACVA)
James McCall, Alexandria Archaeological Commission (AAC)
Peter Pennington, Alexandria Environmental Policy Commission (EPC)
Stephen Thayer, Citizen east of Washington St. and north of King St.
Van Van Fleet, Old Town Civic Association
Christa Watters, Citizen east of Washington St. and north of Pendleton St.

Excused: Christine Bernstein, Founders Park Community Association
Doug Gosnell, Alexandria Marina pleasure boat lease holder
Paul Smedberg, Alexandria City Council

City Staff: Jack Browand, Acting Deputy Director, Parks Operations, Department of
Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities (RPCA)
Faroll Hamer, Director, Department of Planning & Zoning (P&Z)
Jim Hixon, Dockmaster, RPCA
Karl Moritz, Deputy Director, P&Z
Carrie Sanders, Principal Transportation Planner, Department of
Transportation & Environmental Services (T&ES)
Nancy Williams, Principal Planner, P&Z

Guests: Brian Buzzell
Susan Cohen, Public Art Committee
Harry Harrington, Old Dominion Boat Club (ODBC)

Welcome and Introductions

The Committee was called to order at 7:30 a.m. and members and guests introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes from January 17, 2012 Meeting

Pennington requested that draft minutes be corrected to note completion of the Marina pilings project at the end of March, prior to the start of the boating season. Moved by Fox, seconded by Hall, to approve the summary minutes of the January 17, 2012 as amended. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Report from Police Department

There was no report from the Police Department.

Report from Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities

Marina Pilings

Browand reported that work on Marina pilings continues, and should be completed by the end of March as reported in February.

Minnie V

Browand reported that discussions continue regarding license agreement and fees for the vessel. Hall said discussions appear promising and are moving forward in a positive direction.

Torpedo Factory Food Pavilion Public Restrooms

Browand reported that the City Manager's office has been in contact with Gary Baker of the Realco Group regarding preparations to make the restrooms in the closed Torpedo Factory Food Pavilion available to the public. Permits are being obtained to construct a wall to separate the restrooms from the rest of the building. Discussions continue over responsibilities to clean and maintain the restrooms and provide additional signage. Presently, there is no estimate when the restrooms will become available for public use since it depends on approval of plans and receipt of permits. Browand offered to stay in contact with City Manager's office and keep the Committee updated on developments.

National Park Service participation at May Waterfront Committee meeting

A National Park Service (NPS) representative from the George Washington Memorial Parkway unit will attend the May Waterfront Committee meeting to address the Committee regarding Jones Point Park and Daingerfield Island, which are part of the unit. Browand said that Jones Point Park construction is scheduled to be completed in late June. Baum requested that NPS be asked to provide clarification regarding its position on the portion of Wales Alley that extends into the Old Dominion Boat Club parking lot, which was recently raised in a letter from NPS to the City. Pennington noted that NPS will be major players in Waterfront access to the GenOn site, which could be discussed. Browand noted that master planning for Daingerfield Island or other NPS properties north of Old Town are not presently on the radar screen of NPS. Van Fleet said nothing could be done regarding Wales Alley until the pending lawsuit between ODBC and the City is resolved.

Marina Historic Vessel Fees

Browand said that a revised Marina historic vessel fee proposal will be discussed at the March Waterfront Committee meeting. He said the goal is to establish a vessel fee structure to attract ships of character to the Marina, increase the frequency of visits, and provide predictable pricing that can be managed administratively.

"Do Not Climb" Sign on King Street Park Anchor

Fox asked why the "do not climb" sign had been removed from the boat anchor in King Street Park. Browand said there was no clear response from ODBC regarding why the sign was initially placed on the anchor, which is in a City park. Fox said that ownership

of King Street Park is disputed. Harrington said the sign was placed to prevent children from being injured by climbing on the anchor. Baum noted that children were permitted to climb on anchors and cannons in other City parks without incident.

Waterfront FY13 Operating Budget and Capital Improvement Program Priorities

Macek discussed Waterfront-related elements in the City Manager's proposed FY13 Operating Budget and Capital Improvement Program (July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013). New items include:

- One-time operating funding of \$300,000 for a Union Street traffic study
- One-time operating funding of \$100,000 for Waterfront Plan study/implementation contingency
- Creation of an Office of Project Implementation to facilitate implementation of high-priority capital projects, including the Waterfront Plan and other small area plans
- Capital funding of \$750,000 for Waterfront Small Area Plan implementation in FY13, which will include a Design and Engineering for Flood Mitigation and Waterfront Small Area Plan Preliminary Design and Engineering plan

In addition, the timing and amount of funding for the following projects remained unchanged from the FY12 CIP:

- Capital funding of \$3.1 million in FY14 and FY15 and \$3.1 million again in FY19 and FY20 for Marina dredging
- Capital funding of \$90,000 annually through FY22 for City Marina maintenance
- Capital funding of \$4.0 million for Windmill Hill Park bulkhead improvements in FY16 and FY17
- Capital funding of \$1.7 million for City Marina seawalls and \$1.25 million for Marina utility upgrades in FY16 and FY17, unchanged since last year.

The Committee discussed the implementation timeframe for Windmill Hill Park bulkhead improvements. Macek noted that the schedule for the project slipped when budget troubles developed. Van Fleet said that Windmill Hill Park should be addressed by the City, and that including it in the Waterfront Small Area Plan didn't change a thing. Pennington said that the benefit of including Windmill Hill Park in the plan means the proposed expenditure did not get further deferred. Buzzell said that that Smedberg asked about Windmill Hill Park twice during Waterfront Small Area Plan meetings, but the issue was not raised by any other Council members. Baum said there were positive indications that Windmill Hill Park would be moving forward soon. Buzzell encouraged the Committee to ask staff to present its plan for replacing those bulkheads, adding that the City has preliminary plans, but hasn't addressed access and staging. Pennington said that residents should welcome the temporary inconvenience of a staging area so that the bulkheads could be repaired and replaced. The Committee resolved to follow-up with T&ES, which will manage the project, regarding this issue at the March meeting. Browand report that that bulkhead would be inspected during the week.

McCall said he wanted a better feel for where the City stood on Waterfront Plan implementation-related items. He said the Arts and History interests were working in tandem and wants to see early action items completed. He said the design plan is

important to provide a framework to incorporate the history and arts into the Waterfront. Williams notes that capital funding for Waterfront Plan implementation includes both flood mitigation design and engineering and development of a Waterfront design plan.

The Committee discussed the Office of Implementation, which will be a department head-type rank for which Waterfront Plan implementation would be the most important role. It would not be a person to manage Waterfront operations. There was discussion of how to incorporate Waterfront management into the City's corporate structure, a plan for which could be developed over the next fiscal year. Hall said the City needs to have a "Waterfront Czar" to manage existing operations. Van Fleet said the czar would be managing infrastructure, including parking, traffic, and maintenance, which appears to be the role of the Office of Implementation.

Moved by McCall, second by Watters, to raise the following points in a letter to Council:

- Express support for Waterfront Plan implementation-related activities, including funding for design plan, flood mitigation engineering, and traffic study, plus the valet parking pilot program.
- Reiterate the Committee's support for Waterfront-related capital projects in the plan, noting that they should happen sooner than currently scheduled.
- Urge Council members to personally inspect the Windmill Hill Park bulkhead for themselves to survey the present conditions.
- Urge the City to develop a plan for centralized management of Waterfront-related operations over the next fiscal year, for implementation in FY14.
- Support the transfer of Marina security supervision from a General Services contract to RPCA employment, which Hixon noted was actively being worked on by RPCA staff.

After brief discussion, the motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Presentation and Discussion of Waterfront-area Bike Share Station Locations

Sanders presented the City's proposed Capital Bike Share program, including the proposed location of the Waterfront-area bike share station on Cameron Alley between the Torpedo Factory Art Center and the office building at 201 North Union Street.

The Committee noted that additional signage would be required to discourage bicyclists from riding through Torpedo Plaza behind the Art Center. Hall asked about loading times. Van Fleet expressed opposition to bike share given existing issues with bicyclists along Union Street. Watters said that bike share users tend to be different users than traditional bicyclists.

Baum asked for more demographic information regarding users. Sanders said there were currently 20,000 members and 80,000 short-term users in the region, with active stations in the District of Columbia and Arlington County.

Thayer asked what criteria would be applied to determine whether this was an appropriate location, and said the criteria should consider the impact on the area, including whether there are additional crashes. Hall asked for documentation of the

specific location at Cameron and Union, including height and width. She said she was concerned with the approaching spring season and anxious for more information.

Sanders agreed to provide more information to the Committee and resume the discussion at the March Committee meeting.

Discussion of Waterfront Committee Role in Waterfront Small Area Plan Implementation

Macek made the case for the Waterfront Committee's role in Waterfront Small Area Plan implementation. He said that advising regarding the plan was squarely within the Committee's current scope to advise Council and City departments on public and private matters in the Waterfront area. He noted that most key Waterfront stakeholders were already seated at the table, but several additional interests could be represented, including the Planning Commission, Alexandria Commission for the Arts, and additional residential seats to ensure representation from City neighborhoods beyond Old Town.

McCall said that this would create an additional role for the Committee. He said the Committee was already large and asked whether adding a few members would address the issue of additional workload.

Pennington said that the EPC has twice-monthly meetings to manage its workload, including a work session and formal meeting. He said that it would eliminate unnecessary duplication for the Waterfront Committee to advise regarding plan implementation. He said a second committee wouldn't make sense.

Watters suggested the creation of an implementation subcommittee to report back to the full Committee. Macek said that the Committee had a history of applying subcommittees to manage active issues, including a Marina Subcommittee and Economic Development Subcommittee in recent years. Hafer said a Waterfront Plan subcommittee could have a subset of Committee members. Macek noted that subcommittee members must be members of the full Committee, and that that the Waterfront Committee has typically allowed all members of the full Committee present to vote at any subcommittee meetings.

Watters said that representatives from outside Old Town provide a different viewpoint than people from the east side who live near the Waterfront. Macek noted that all current members of the Waterfront Committee living in the City live in Old Town.

There was discussion of the formal difference between City committees and commissions, without complete resolution.

Buzzell noted that when the Committee was formed, the Waterfront was completely different than it is today. He urged the Committee to re-consider what organizations should have membership. He said the dynamics have changed and there is the opportunity to re-organize membership if the Committee starts from a clean sheet of paper.

Thayer said that according to the Committee's web site, its purpose is to study and deal with issues of private and public issues. He noted that according to that text, the Committee has the jurisdiction to advise on Waterfront Plan implantation now. He said if the role is to provide transparency for Waterfront Plan implementation, then the Committee needs to make that clear. Williams noted that according to the section of the City Code establishing the Waterfront Committee (§2-4-54 Functions), its role is to advise on "matters pertaining to the use of the Alexandria Waterfront by commercial and private vessels." Macek noted that this was a much narrower scope than has been the case for the Committee.

Hamer said she was anxious to get the Union Street study underway, and hoped to have an advisory committee in place before the study began.

Hall said that the Committee should add to its scope and membership, but should note that the Waterfront Plan is land use plan. She said the Committee needed to be conscientious not to get away from focusing on the Marina. She said that it is a challenge working among three departments regarding Marina issues, including lighting, security, and snow removal. She said the Committee was not paying attention to what's happening with private and commercial boats.

Pennington said that the answer is a subcommittee. He said that if membership were widened, the Committee would have more ability to have active subcommittees. He said the Marina subcommittee could be a standing subcommittee. He said there will be very be specific implementation issues that subcommittees could deal with in detail.

McCall noted that subcommittees need to have public meetings, which Pennington acknowledged.

Watters said that since the Committee devoted time to enactment of the Waterfront Plan, she couldn't see why the Committee would want to give up implementation. She said the Committee needed to ensure that there would be dedication by members. The Committee members went around the room and each member in attendance affirmed their interest in seeing the Committee advise on Waterfront Plan implementation.

There was general agreement that the Committee needed to discuss the issue further, and scheduled a special meeting for Thursday, March 1, 2011 at 4:00 p.m. in the Sister Cities Room of City Hall. At that meeting, the Committee would consider specific proposals for changing the scope and membership of the Committee. In the mean time, Macek would draft a letter to Council signaling the Committee's interest in advising regarding Waterfront Small Area Plan implantation.

Announcements / Public Comments

There were no announcements or public comments.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned without objection at 9:44 AM